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Letter dated 16 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to the two latest acts of Palestinian terrorism in the cities of Kfar Saba and Sderot.

This evening, a number of mortar shells were launched at the southern Israeli city of Sderot. Though there were no reported casualties, this attack, which targeted a city in the heart of Israel with mortar fire, represents a serious escalation of the conflict.

The other attack occurred this past Saturday evening, 14 April 2001, when two pipe bombs exploded approximately one hour apart, injuring 70-year-old Pinchas Levy with shrapnel and doing damage to several parked cars. Kfar Saba was the scene of another bombing on 28 March 2001 in which two Israeli teenagers were killed.

These attacks come amidst an escalating Palestinian terrorist campaign against Israeli civilians which in recent weeks has increasingly been waged via mortar attacks against Israeli communities. In one such attack, on 3 April 2001, Palestinians fired several mortar shells at the community of Atzmona, seriously injuring a 15-month-old baby boy, Ariel Yered, and lightly injuring his mother Leah. The child was evacuated to Beersheba's Soroka Hospital, where he underwent surgery for multiple shrapnel wounds to his head and spine.

The ongoing campaign of Palestinian terrorism has been detailed in a series of letters dated 28 March 2001 (A/55/863-S/2001/291), 27 March 2001 (A/55/860-S/2001/280), 26 March 2001 (A/55/858-S/2001/278), 19 March 2001 (A/55/842-S/2001/244), 5 March 2001 (A/55/821-S/2001/193), 2 March 2001 (A/55/819-S/2001/187), 14 February 2001 (A/55/787-S/2001/137), 13 February 2001 (A/55/781-S/2001/132), 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-S/2001/103), 25 January 2001 (A/55/748-S/2001/81), 23 January 2001 (A/55/742-S/2001/71), 28 December 2000 (A/55/719-S/2000/1252), 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114), 20 November 2000 (A/55/634-S/2000/1108) and 2 November 2000 (A/55/540-S/2000/1065). Seventy-three Israelis have been killed in terrorist attacks since the outbreak of hostilities in late September 2000.

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Despite the gruesome nature of these attacks, and the increasing number of children who have been killed or injured in recent weeks, the Palestinians have continually stated their intention to persist in their terrorist campaign. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, spiritual leader of the Hamas terrorist organization, stated in an Internet conversation on the web site Islam Online on 1 April 2001 that Hamas will act to inflict the maximum damage on Israeli soldiers and civilians and that the organization's efforts have recently been facilitated by the Palestinian Authority which "shuts its eyes and does not pursue the fighters". Other statements by Hamas members have indicated that the organization has numerous suicide bombers standing at the ready to carry out deadly attacks on Israelis.

The Government of Israel holds the Palestinian Authority responsible for the recent bombing in Kfar Saba and the mortar attack on Sderot in the light of its release of convicted terrorist prisoners from Palestinian prisons and its failure to act resolutely to combat terrorist elements operating from within the territory under its control. The stance of the Palestinian leadership blatantly contravenes Chairman Arafat's explicit commitment of 9 September 1993 to renounce the use of violence and to act to control those who perpetrate it.

Israel again calls on Chairman Arafat to abide by his commitments, to take concerted action against terrorist elements, and to work to ensure that such atrocities do not recur in the future.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 164, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative